DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20591

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OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

July 7, 1970

Honorable John H. Shaffer
Administrator
Federal Aviation Administration
Department of Transportation
Washington, D. C. 20590

Dear Mr. Shaffer:

Our investigation of a Piper PA-32-300 accident at San Francisco, California, on September 16, 1969, disclosed that a lack of fuel caused the loss of engine power and the resultant accident.

It was learned that fuel flow to the engine was prohibited by a closed fuel tank selector valve, although the cockpit control handle was properly positioned to permit fuel flow. Subsequently, a loose connecting pin was found within the valve which permitted the valve position to be non-coincident with the control position. Apparently, the design of the pin permits it to work loose and affect the control-to-valve coupling.

Another accident occurred to a PA 28-235 in Texas, on October 11, 1969. It was learned that the same type of valve pin failed in its function, resulting in engine power loss and the accident.

The valve, Model 1H26-4, manufactured by Airborne Manufacturing Company, is being redesigned to prevent this pin malfunction. This valve is used on Piper aircraft and those of other manufacturers. Piper Aircraft Corporation will install this new design on newly manufactured aircraft and will retrofit other aircraft by the issuance of a Service Bulletin.

In view of the above, we recommend the following action:

> That the provisions of the forthcoming Piper Service Bulletin regarding the retrofitting of this valve be made mandatory on all Piper aircraft as well as aircraft of other manufacturers using this fuel selector valve.

Our Bureau of Aviation Safety staff is available to provide additional information or assistance.

Sincerely yours,

John H. Reed

John H. Reed
Chairman